

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 5, 7, 10, 40, 75, 78, 79, 94, 98-101 have been amended, claims 61-74 are withdrawn, and claims 3, 4, 15, 45, 77, 91-93, 96 and 97 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1, 5-15, 16-44, 46-60, 75, 76, 78-90, 94, 95 and 98-113 are pending and under consideration.

I. Rejections Under 35 USC § 112

Claims 1-60 and 94-113 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicants regard as the invention.

In particular, the Examiner asserts that the recitation of a seal zone element positioned adjacent the contact element conflicts with the recitation of the contact supporting protrusion.

The Examiner's attention is directed to Figure 2 of the present application, for example, which shows a seal zone element 214 positioned adjacent a contact element 211, and a strut member 225 that includes a contact supporting protrusion element 28 longitudinally spaced from a seal zone protruding projection 26. Therefore, the recitation in the claims does not conflict as asserted. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 15 and 45 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 10, 40 and 79 have been amended to more clearly set forth the end of the strut includes a stop, wherein one of the contact element and the seal zone element is held between the stop and the other of the contact element and the seal zone element. Similarly, claims 99 and 100 have been amended to more clearly set forth the strut includes a first end and a second end, the first end including a stop formed in the outer surface, wherein one of the contact element and the seal zone element is held between the stop and the other of the contact element and the seal zone element, and claim 101 has been amended to more clearly set forth the second end of the strut

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includes a stop formed in the outer surface. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4, 7-13, 34, 37-39, 41-43, 77-82, 97, 99 and 101 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 4 and intervening claim 3, Claims 3 and 4 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and claim 5 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of base claim 1. Claim 75 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 77, claim 77 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and claim 78 has been amended to depend from claim 75. Finally, claim 94 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 97 and intervening claim 96, claim 98 has been amended to depend from claim 94 and claims 96 and 97 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

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III. Conclusion

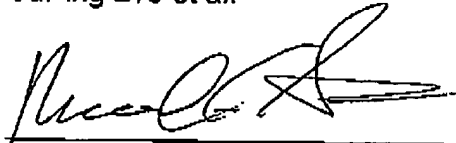
There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney to attend to those matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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